

Deadline for Applications is May 20, 2009

Washington, DC - In an effort to ensure local firefighters and emergency responders have access to the safety gear and equipment they need to protect the public and themselves, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today urged fire and EMS organizations to apply for federal grants through the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program if they have not already done so. This year's deadline for filing an AFG application is May 20, 2009.

"I strongly encourage all local fire departments and EMS providers to consider applying for federal funding through the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program if they have not already done so," Hinchey said. "My office is available to help any applicants with questions or problems they may have with the application process or grant program, but these applications need to be submitted very soon as the deadline is just over two weeks away. These grants play a critical role in making sure that our local emergency responders have modern equipment and updated safety gear and also save our local communities from shouldering the full cost of these important items."

The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

Hinchey has helped fund the AFG program each year since its inception. To date, \$14.5 million in federal grants have been awarded to fire and emergency departments in Hinchey's congressional district. The congressman has sponsored a number of workshops across his congressional district to help fire departments successfully navigate the grant application process. Hinchey is also the author of the SERVE (Supporting Emergency Responders' Volunteer Efforts) Act, which would provide a \$1,000 federal tax credit to individuals who are active members of volunteer firefighting and EMS organizations.

Municipalities, counties, and departments interested in applying for federal grants this year through the AFG program can get more information on FEMA's website at: www.firegrantsupport.com/afg/. Additionally, grant applicants with questions can contact one of Hinchey's New York offices for assistance.

The Grant Programs Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency administers the grants in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.